Listing of Claims:

1. (original) In a communication system having a plurality of communication devices distributed among one or more sites, a method comprising the steps of:

determining a rule-based criteria for prioritizing the sites;

determining, based on the criteria, a restart sequence for the sites; and

in the event of a system restart, establishing service for the sites in order of the restart sequence.

2. (original) The method of claim 1, performed by a network manager of the communication system.

3. (original) The method of claim 1, performed by a zone controller of the communication system, the step of determining a rule-based criteria comprises receiving the rule-based criteria from a network manager of the communication system.

4. (original) The method of claim 3, wherein the step of determining a rule-based criteria comprises receiving periodic updates of the rule-based criteria from the network manager.

5. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of determining a rule-based criteria comprises:

determining one or more priority communication devices; and

prioritizing the sites based on locations of the one or more priority communication devices among the one or more sites.

2

6. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of determining a rule-based criteria comprises:

determining one or more priority talkgroups; and

prioritizing the sites based on locations of affiliated talkgroup members of the one or more priority talkgroups among the one or more sites.

7. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the step of determining a rule-based criteria comprises defining a console site as a highest priority site based on a number of monitored talkgroups at the console site.

8. (original) The method of claim 1, wherein the plurality of communication devices are distributed among one or more sites and zones, the step of determining a rule-based criteria comprises determining a rule-based criteria for prioritizing the sites and zones, the step of determining a restart sequence comprises determining a restart sequence for the sites and zones, and the step of establishing service comprises establishing service for the sites and zone in order of the restart sequence.

9. (original) In a communication system having a plurality of communication devices distributed among one or more sites, a method comprising the steps of:

determining a rule-based criteria for prioritizing the sites;

obtaining system usage data associated with the sites;

determining, based on the rules and system usage data, a restart sequence for the sites; and

in the event of a system restart, establishing service at the sites in order of the restart sequence.

10. (original) The method of claim 9, performed by a network manager of the communication system.

3

11. (original) The method of claim 9, performed by a zone controller of the communication system, the step of determining a rule-based criteria comprises receiving the rule-based criteria from a network manager of the communication system.

12. (original) The method of claim 11, wherein the step of obtaining system usage data comprises receiving the system usage data from a network manager of the communication system.

13. (original) The method of claim 9, wherein the step of determining a rule-based criteria comprises prioritizing the sites based on subscriber activity among the one or more sites.

14. (original) The method of claim 13, wherein the step of prioritizing the sites based on subscriber activity comprises prioritizing the sites based on numbers of affiliated subscribers among the one or more sites.

15. (original) The method of claim 13, wherein the step of prioritizing the sites based on subscriber activity comprises prioritizing the sites based on air-time usage among the one or more sites.

16. (original) The method of claim 13, wherein the step of prioritizing the sites based on subscriber activity comprises prioritizing the sites based on numbers of call requests among the one or more sites.

17. (original) The method of claim 9, wherein the plurality of communication devices are distributed among one or more sites and zones, the step of determining a rule-based criteria comprises determining a rule-based criteria for prioritizing the sites and zones, the step of obtaining system usage data comprises obtaining system usage data associated with the sites and zones, the step of determining a restart sequence comprises determining a restart sequence for the sites and zones, and the step of establishing service comprises establishing service for the sites and zone in order of the restart sequence.

4